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**NORWAY:** Norway rejected membership in the European Communities by roughly a seven-percent margin in a two-day referendum that ended yesterday.

Prime Minister Trygve Bratteli may announce the resignation of his minority Labor government in the wake of the defeat. Bratteli said earlier this month that he would resign if the vote were negative. The Norwegian constitution does not permit the dissolution of parliament and interim elections. King Olav V could ask former prime minister Per Borten of the Center Party or Einar Gerhardson of the Labor Party to try to form an interim government until regularly scheduled elections are held in the fall of 1973. Restoration of the old four-party coalition--Conservative, Liberal, Center, and Christian Peoples parties--under Borten appears to be the more likely possibility, but a coalition including Labor cannot be excluded.

Although the referendum was only advisory, the significant margin against EC membership is expected to preclude further consideration of the EC treaty by the Norwegian parliament. A new government will probably try to negotiate a free trade agreement with the EC similar to the Swedish and Finnish agreements, currently pending ratification.

The Norwegian vote will affect the Danish referendum on EC entry to be held on 2 October. While the latest polls show pro-EC forces in Denmark with a sizable lead, the negative vote in Norway could close that gap. Prime Minister Jens Otto Krag said last week that, despite the polls, he saw only a narrow margin in favor of EC entry. At that time Bratteli told Danish television interviewers that Denmark should join the EC even if Norway did not, so that the Nordic countries would be assured of a "spokesman at Brussels."

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